

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 01476 111706Z

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ACTION NEA-12

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SUBJ: ATHENS NEWSPAPERS COUNSEL AGAINST RETURN TO
POLITICAL NORMALITY

REF ATHENS A-57, MARCH 6, 1974

1. SUMMARY. ATHENS PRESS WEEKENDS MARCH 2-3 AND
MARCH 9-10 PUBLISHED EDITORIALS ADVISING THAT GREECE WOULD
BE UNWISE TO DRAFT NEW CONSTITUTION AT PRESENT OR TO
CONFRONT POLITICAL ISSUES UNTIL OTHER PROBLEMS ARE RESOLVED.
NEWSPAPERS NOTED REGIME OF SPECIAL POWERS IS BEST EQUIPPED
TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS WITHOUT DISSENT AND CONFLICTING
INTEREST WHICH EMANATES FROM PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM---
"ARMED FORCES WILL SHOULDER POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD
A CONSTITUTION WHEN CLOUDS HAVE DISPERSED." END SUMMARY.

2. ELEFTHEROS COSMOS (CONSERVATIVE) IN FEATURE
EDITORIAL MARCH 3 WROTE THAT IT DISAGREED WITH DRAFTING
NEW CONSTITUTION---"COUNTRY'S PROBLEM OF GOVERNMENT
IS FOR TOMORROW." COSMOS REASONED THAT NEW EUROPEAN
REALITIES WOULD IMPACT ON GREEK SITUATION. "DEMOCRACY
ITSELF IS ON TRIAL." "EVEN IF DRAFTED NEW CONSTITUTION
WOULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED. WHEN STORM IS OVER THEN TIME
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PAGE 02 ATHENS 01476 111706Z

WILL COME FOR THE ARMED FORCES TO ESTABLISH A GREEK

SYSTEM OF SELF-GOVERNMENT IN CLOSE COOPERATION WITH
THE PEOPLE."

3. REINFORCING ELEFTHEROS COSMOS' LINE WAS SIMILAR
EDITORIAL IN AKROPOLIS SAMEDAY WHICH OBSERVED THAT TRYING
TO SOLVE NATION'S PROBLEMS-- POLITICAL SYSTEM, ECONOMIC,
MODERNIZING STATE MACHINERY, LIMITING BUREAUCRACY,
FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ETC. - WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE UNDER
PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT. AFTER REMARKING ON MERITS OF
REGIME OF SPECIAL POWERS, EDITORIAL CALLED ON MEN WITH
LEADERSHIP TALENT TO CONTRIBUTE TO PROPER ADMINISTRATION
OF NATION..." AND THUS LEAD TO CONDITIONS WHICH WOULD
ACCELERATE CONFRONTING OUR POLITICAL PROBLEM AS WELL".
ARMED FORCES WEEKLY NEWSPAPER ICHO WROTE ALSO ON
MARCH 3 THAT GREEK PUBLIC HAS CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT
WHICH WILL LEAD COUNTRY TO ACHIEVEMENT OF IDEALS OF
NOVEMBER 25 REGIME.

4. SUNDAY EDITORIALS FOLLOWING WEEKEND BROUGHT
CONTINUING PRAISE BY ICHO FOR PRESIDENT GHIZIKIS WHICH
INDICATES POPULAR CONFIDENCE IN NEW NATIONAL LEADERSHIP.
"MAJORITY OF GREEKS LOOK UPON RESTORATION OF AN
UNOBSTRUCTED CLIMATE OF STABILITY, CALM, AND OPTIMISM
AS PRICELESS BLESSING FOR CREATIVE MARCH OF NATION---"
AKROPOLIS (POPULAR, RIGHTIST) ON MARCH 10 QUOTE THAT
GENERAL GHIZIKIS ENGENDERS ENTHUSIASM AND WARMTH AS
LARGE CROWDS CHEER HIM DURING HIS TOUR OF CENTRAL
GREECE. EDITORIAL CONCLUDED THAT POPULAR SYMPATHY
FOR THE ARMED FORCES IS IMPORTANT AS REGIME "ENSURES
PEACE OF NATION AND POLITICAL PROGRESS (SIC) WHICH ARE
ESSENTIAL FOR ECONOMIC AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT."

5. COMMENT: IN ERA OF PRESS "SELF-CENSORSHIP" WITH
UNAMBIGUOUS GUIDELINES HANDED DOWN DIRECTLY BY MILITARY,
EDITORIALS PRAISING REGIME AND CAUTIONING AGAINST
PREMATURE RETURN TO POLITICAL NORMALITY SUGGEST OFFICIAL
IMPETUS. ELEFTHEROS COSMOS' TAKING THE LEAD MAY
INDICATE THIS PAPER WHICH HAS DECLINING CIRCULATION
IS ASPIRING TO BECOME NEW REGIME'S MOUTHPIECE, SAME
POSITION IT UNOFFICIALLY HELD DURING PAPADOPOULOS REGIME.
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PAGE 03 ATHENS 01476 111706Z

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